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Applic. No. 10/776,361
Amdt. dated May 9, 2006
Reply to Office action of March 15, 2006

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-5 remain in the application.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-4 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Eitel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,133,543) (hereinafter "Eitel") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 5 calls for, *inter alia*:

a suction belt disposed to be guided over the feed table and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction

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openings aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures.

The Eitel reference discloses an apparatus for conveying sheets via two conveyor belts (4). A table (1) includes compensation bore holes (61 and 62) provided between the conveyor belts (4). Each of the belts includes perforations (7), which overlie suction bore holes (2) in the surface (6) of the table (1).

The Examiner correctly stated on page 3 of the Office action that "with this scenario, the first and second rows of suction openings (7) are both aligned with the second spaced-apart row of suction apertures (2)." However, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner's allegation which follows on page 3 of the Office action that "this scenario meets all of the limitations of claim 5", is not correct. More specifically, in Eitel the first and second rows of suction openings are both aligned with one row of suction apertures. This is absolutely not what is recited in claim 5 of the instant application. Claim 5 recites that each of the rows of suction openings overlies a respective one of the rows of suction apertures. In other words the first row of suction openings overlies a first row of suction apertures and the second row of suction openings overlies a second row of suction apertures. The claim

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language absolutely precludes the Examiner's interpretation that two rows of suction openings are assigned to a single row of suction apertures. Therefore, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner's allegation that "this scenario meets all of the limitations of claim 5", is not correct.

Should the Examiner still disagree with the above-given remarks, it is kindly requested that the Examiner seek the assistance of the Examiner's supervisor to help clarify the use of "each item having a respective one of another item".

As seen from the above-given remarks, the reference does not show a suction belt disposed to be guided over the feed table and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures, as recited in claim 5 of the instant application. The Eitel reference discloses a belt with rows of perforations assigned to a single row of suction bore holes. Eitel does not disclose that a single belt has two rows of perforations and that each row of perforations has its own separate row of suction bore holes. The Examiner's comments suggest that the Examiner agrees with this point. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which a suction belt is disposed to be guided

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over the feed table and has at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings is aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures.

Since claim 5 is believed to be allowable, dependent claims 2-4 are believed to be allowable as well.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 5. Claim 5 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 5, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-5 are solicited.

It is appreciatively noted from item 3 on page 5 of the Office action, that claim 1 has been allowed.

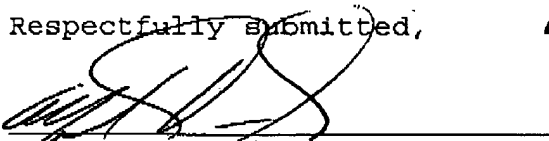
In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

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If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition
for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner &
Greenberg P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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